

Testimony Concerning HB62
Mandatory Trapper Education

Montana House of Representatives Fish, Wildlife & Parks
Chairman Van Dyk
And Committee Members

EXHIBIT S
DATE 1-8-09
HB 62

My name is Tom Barnes; age 54, I have resided in Dillon, Montana for 53 years. I am an avid outdoorsman, who has hunted, fished, and trapped since childhood. I am currently the President of the Montana Trappers Association and I am here to represent the Board of Directors as well as the members of our organization.

The Montana Trappers Association has a long standing history of educating trappers both young and old. We are avid supporters of education on the ethical treatment of both fur bearing animals and predators, we support BMP's (Best Management Practices) in terms of what type of equipment and where trapping equipment is to be used. If I may I would like to give you some facts and statistics of what the MTA has accomplished.
January 1978- 1st trapper ed program was held.

April 1980- 1st draft of trapper ed manual was completed.

June 1990- Trappers Cabin (mini-museum) was completed.

April 1993- MTA enters into agreement with MTFWP and Pitman/Robertson funds are used for trapper education.

June 2000- 1st Youth Trapper Camp held.

The Youth Trapper Camp is a private entity, operated by Jim and Fran Buell from Gildford, Montana. But uses MTA certified instructors.

There have been over 2100 students certified through the MTA trapper ed program and over 160,000 school children and the members of the general public educated on the true facts of trapping and conservation; through Education Outreach programs conducted by the MTA.

The MTA will support this bill with the following amendment.

"Section 2. (7), page 5, line 5." The department shall provide for a course of trapper safety and education from any state or national education program approved by the department or for a trapper safety and education program developed by the department and for that purpose (strike may and insert will cooperate with (strike a nonprofit state trapping association and insert the Montana Trappers Association) having as one of its objectives the promotion of safe and responsible trapping. The department may designate as an instructor any person it finds to be competent to give trapper safety and education instruction. A person appointed shall give the course of instruction and shall issue a certificate of completion to any person successfully completing the course.

Again my name is Tom Barnes from Dillon, Montana
President of the Montana Trappers Association

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Tom Barnes